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64th Congress, 1st Session. } HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES. { Document No. 55.

LITTLE RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES, BAYOUS CASTOR AND DUGDEMONA, LA.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

TRANSMITTING,

WITH A LETTER FROM THE CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, REPORT ON PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF LITTLE RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES, BAYOUS CASTOR AND DUGDEMONA, FROM THE MOUTH OF LITTLE RIVER TO WINNFIELD, LA., ON BAYOU DUGDEMONA, AND TO OLLA, LA., ON BAYOU CASTOR.

December 7, 1915.—Referred to the Committee on Rivers and Harbors and ordered to be printed, with illustration.

War Department,
Washington, December 6, 1915.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Sir: I have the honor to transmit herewith a letter from the Chief of Engineers, United States Army, dated 4th instant, together with copy of a report from Maj. J. R. Slattery, Corps of Engineers, dated July 7, 1915, with map, on preliminary examination of Little River and tributaries, Bayous Castor and Dugdemona, La., made by him in compliance with the provisions of the river and harbor act approved March 4, 1915.

Very respectfully,

Lindley M. Garrison,
Secretary of War.

War Department,
Office of the Chief of Engineers,
Washington, December 4, 1915.

From: The Chief of Engineers, United States Army.
To: The Secretary of War.
Subject: Preliminary examination of Little River and tributaries, Bayous Castor and Dugdemona, La.

1. There is submitted herewith, for transmission to Congress, report dated July 7, 1915, with map, by Maj. J. R. Slattery, Corps of Engineers, on preliminary examination called for by the following item contained in the river and harbor act approved March 4, 1915:

> Little River and tributaries, Castor and Dugdemonia [Dugdemona], from the mouth of Little River to Winnfield, Louisiana, on the Dugdemonia, and to Olla, Louisiana, on the Castor.

2. Little River is formed by the union of Bayous Castor and Dugdemona. Both of these bayous are narrow, tortuous streams, obstructed by snags, trees, and fixed bridges, and have no commerce or navigation. Little River is navigable at high stages for boats drawing 3 feet, but at low water the channel is so seriously obstructed by snags, trees, etc., as to render navigation impossible. The district officer reports that the improvement of these streams would be expensive and that it is desired with a view to the drainage of low lands rather than for the benefit of navigation. He is of opinion, in which the division engineer concurs, that these streams are unworthy of improvement by the Federal Government.

3. This report has been referred, as required by law, to the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, and attention is invited to its report herewith, dated September 14, 1915, concurring in the views of the district officer and the division engineer.

4. After due consideration of the above-mentioned reports, I concur in the views of the district officer, the division engineer, and the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, and therefore report that the improvement by the United States of Little River and tributaries, Bayous Castor and Dugdemona, from the mouth of Little River to Winnfield, La., on Bayou Dugdemona, and to Olla, La., on Bayou Castor, is not deemed advisable at the present time.

Dan C. Kingman,
Chief of Engineers U. S. Army.

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF ENGINEERS FOR RIVERS AND HARBORS.

[Third indorsement.]

The Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors,
September 14, 1915.

The Chief of Engineers, United States Army:

1. The following is in review of the district officer's report on preliminary examination of Little River and tributaries, Castor and Dugdemona, from the mouth of Little River to Winnfield, La., on the Dugdemona, and to Olla, La., on the Castor, called for by the act of March 4, 1915.

2. Little River is formed by the union of Bayous Castor and Dugdemona. It is about 115 miles in length and empties into Black River at Trinity, La. Both the bayous are narrow, tortuous streams, obstructed by snags, trees, and fixed bridges, and have no commerce or navigation. Little River is navigable for boats drawing 3 feet, at high stages during the winter and spring, but at low water the channel is so seriously obstructed by snags, trees, etc., as to render navigation impossible. Originally the river was used extensively for rafting timber, but except for a few small rafts and a limited amount of miscellaneous commerce, there is now no traffic.

3. It appears from the investigations of the district officer, that improvement would be very expensive, and, moreover, it is desired on account of the benefit expected in the drainage of low lands and not with a view to securing navigation or any expectation that a commerce would be created as a result of the improvement. In view of these conditions, the district officer is of the opinion, in which the division engineer concurs, that all three streams are unworthy of improvement by the Federal Government.

4. The usual notice of unfavorable report was sent out by the district officer, but no communications on the subject have been received by the board.

5. There is no navigation on Castor and Dugdemona Bayous and only a small amount at high stages on Little River. The improvement is apparently desired in the interests of drainage, and would not result in any material commercial benefit so far as navigation is concerned. The board therefore concurs with the district officer and the division engineer and reports that, in its opinion, it is not advisable for the United States to undertake the improvement of these streams.

6. In compliance with law, the board reports that there are no questions of terminal facilities, water power, or other related subjects having any material bearing upon the improvement of navigation at this locality.

For the board:

Frederic V. Abbot,
Colonel, Corps of Engineers,
Senior Member Present.

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION OF LITTLE RIVER AND TRIBUTARIES, CASTOR AND DUGDEMONA, LA.

United States Engineer Office,
Vicksburg, Miss., July 7, 1915.

From: The District Engineer Officer.
To: The Chief of Engineers, United States Army
(Through the Division Engineer).
Subject: Report on preliminary examination of Little River and tributaries, Castor and Dugdemona.

1. The river and harbor act approved March 4, 1915, provided for the preliminary examination of Little River and tributaries, Castor and Dugdemona, from the mouth of Little River to Winnfield, La., on the Dugdemona, and to Olla, La., on the Castor. The duty of making this examination was assigned to the undersigned by department letter dated March 15, 1915, and report is submitted accordingly.

2. Little River is formed by the union of Bayous Castor and Dugdemona near the northeast corner of Grant Parish, La. It flows in southerly direction for about 40 miles, thence in a southeasterly direction for about 40 miles more, and enters Lake Catahoula; it leaves the lake by two channels known, respectively, as French Fork and Old River, which unite about 8 miles from the lake, from which point the river flows in a northeasterly direction for 15 miles and empties into the Black River at Trinity, La. The most generally used outlet is the French Fork, which leaves the southern shore of the lake about 7 miles from the point where Little River enters it. The length of French Fork from the point where it leaves the lake to the point where it joins Old River is about 12 miles. The total length of the river from its source to its mouth is therefore about 115 miles. Except in the vicinity of Catahoula Lake the banks of the river are high. In the vicinity of the lake they are low and swampy. At high stages, which occur in the winter and spring, the river is readily navigable throughout its course for boats drawing 3 feet. At low stages, which occur during the summer and fall, the channel is so obstructed by sunken logs as to render through navigation impossible. Some local navigation, however, is possible. The width of the stream increases from about 200 feet at its source to about 600 feet at its mouth. The fluctuation between high and low stages is about 35 feet. The crops are moved in the fall and early winter. The river is spanned by bridges at Rochelle, Grant, and Archie. The first and last named are drawbridges with openings 60 feet and 114 feet wide in the clear, respectively. The bridge at Grant is a fixed bridge with a head clearance of 6½ feet at high water and a clearance between piers of 172 feet.

3. Dugdemona Bayou is a narrow, tortuous stream lying entirely within Winn Parish, La. It is really the main drain of a strip of low bottom land about 17 miles in length and from 1 to 2 miles wide, extending in a southeasterly direction from Winnfield, La., to Rochelle, La. In its upper reaches its banks are low and swampy. The banks become higher as the mouth is approached, where they are probably 15 feet high. The width of the stream varies from about 40 feet near the source to about 100 feet near the mouth. High-water stages occur during the winter and spring and are between 15 and 20 feet higher than low stages, which occur in the summer and fall. Extreme floods are reported to have gone considerable higher. The stream is spanned by fixed bridges near Winnfield, Curry, and the mouth. The bridge near Winnfield is a trestle bridge only a few feet above the water surface, with both spans approximately 15 feet apart. The bridge near Curry is a truss bridge with a clear span of approximately 75 feet. The bridge near the mouth was not examined. The channel is much obstructed by snags, overhanging trees, and great cypresses growing in the bed and by sharp bends.

4. Bayou Castor, like Bayou Dugdemona, is a narrow tortuous stream, forming the principal drain of a strip of low heavily timbered bottom land, about 12 miles long and from 1 to 2 miles wide, extendin a southwesterly direction from Olla, La., to Rochelle. Its banks are somewhat higher than the banks of the Dugdemona, and its width about the same. It is subject to the same fluctuations as the Dugdemona and at the same periods. Fixed highway bridges span

the stream near Castor and at the mouth, affording clear openings estimated, respectively, to be 60 and 40 feet. Both bridges are but slightly above flood stage. The channel is obstructed in the same manner as the channel of the Dugdemona.

5. Previous examinations of these streams have been made as follows: Dugdemona Bayou in 1887; report printed on page 1489, Report of Chief of Engineers for 1887; unfavorable.

Bayou Castor in 1891; report printed on page 2028, Report of Chief of Engineers for 1891; unfavorable.

Little River in 1887, report printed on page 1498, Report of Chief of Engineers for 1887; unfavorable, except for the portion between mouth and Catahoula Lake, which was recommended to be cleared of snags, sunken logs, and leaning trees.

Little River in 1895, report printed on page 1984, Report of Chief of Engineers for 1895; unfavorable, except a portion below Catahoula Lake.

6. The bottom lands through which Dugdemona and Castor Bayous flow are very rich and would be very productive if protected from overflow. They are overflowed, however, practically every year and are not under cultivation. These overflows may result either from freshets brought down by the stream or from back water from the Red River, or from a combination of the two. Bordering the bottom lands are the hill lands, on which the soil is said to be poor. These hill lands were originally covered with valuable timber, and are still only partially cleared. Lumbering is the principal business in the territory as well as on the upper portion of Little River. Below Lake Catahoula, rich plantations, producing cotton and corn, border both banks of the river.

7. Originally considerable use was made of Little River for rafting out logs and staves, and some use was made occasionally of Dugdemona and Castor Bayous for the same purposes, but with the coming of the railroads, which closely parallel all these streams, practically all of this traffic has left the river and is now carried by rail. There is no commerce now on the Dugdemona and Castor and only an occasional raft and about 500 tons of cotton, 1,000 tons of cotton seed, and 250 tons of miscellaneous merchandise per year on the Little River. A number of lumber and sawmill men were interviewed as to the desirability of improving these streams in the interest of better transportation facilities for the handling of logs and lumber, and all agreed that neither lumber nor logs would be moved to any extent on the streams, even if improved. Mr. Henry E. Hardtner, to whom nearly every one interviewed referred to as the leader in the movement for the improvement of Dugdemona and Castor, frankly stated that it was not navigable channels or navigation that was wanted, but drainage, and that it was not expected that the United States would undertake this, but it was desired that the subject be investigated and a report made showing just what could be done in this line.

8. Dugdemona and Castor Bayous are not susceptible of sufficient improvement to render them capable of serving the purposes of transportation. Little River is more susceptible of improvement, and could be made a useful means of transportation if it were needed as such. There is, however, little demand for the improvement of any of these streams, and what little demand there is is based on the

influence which their improvement might have on drainage and freight rates rather than on any desire or necessity of using them for actual transportation purposes; the commerce on them is nil, or negligible; and there is little prospect that there would be any material increase as the result of their improvement. All three streams are therefore believed to be unworthy of improvement by the Federal Government.

9. No plans for the development of water power nor for the drainage of adjacent territory could be coordinated with plans for the development of these streams in the interest of navigation.

10. There is submitted herewith a sketch map showing these rivers and the territory they drain.

J. R. Slattery,
Major, Corps of Engineers.

[First indorsement.]

Office Division Engineer, Western Division,
St. Louis, Mo., July 20, 1915.

The Chief of Engineers, United States Army:

1. Concurring in the views of the district officer that the streams are unworthy of improvement by the General Government.

C. McD. Townsend,
Colonel, Corps of Engineers.

[For report of the Board of Engineers for Rivers and Harbors, see p. 2.]

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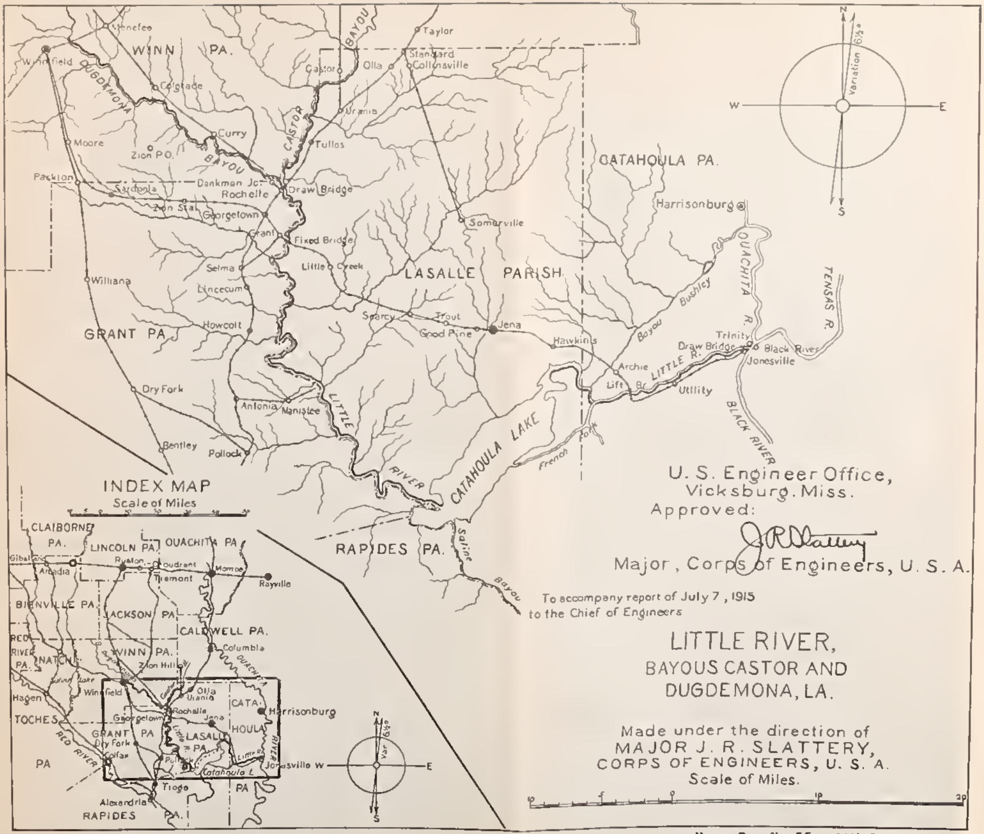
WAR DEPARTMENT. CORPS OF ENGINEERS, U. S. ARMY.



U. S. Engineer Office,
Vicksburg, Miss.
Approved:
JRSlattery
Major, Corps of Engineers, U. S. A.

To accompany report of July 7, 1915
to the Chief of Engineers

LITTLE RIVER,
BAYOUS CASTOR AND DUGDEMONA, LA.

Made under the direction of
MAJOR J. R. SLATTERY,
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, U. S. A.
Scale of Miles.
0 5 10 20

House Doc. No. 55 ; 64th Cong., 1st Sess.